

A View of the Divine Conduct, in the Government of this Lower World:

BEING A
DISCOURSE
IN
COMMEMORATION
OF THE
DREADFUL STORM

In November 1703.

Preach'd in

*Little Wild-Street near Lincoln's-Inn-Fields,
the 27th of November 1729.*

*Published at the Desire of several Gentlemen, who
annually observe that Day, in that Place.*

By *DAVID REES.*

L O N D O N .

Printed for the Author in the Year 1730.

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THE OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER
OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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To the Worthy


COMMUNITY

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Protestant Dissenters

In Little *Wild-Street*.

Honoured and Beloved,

 IS a lasting Honour to your Society, to have had a pious * Person among you, so devoted to observe the Wonders of Providence, as to leave behind him a kind Voice, to give you an annual Sum-

* Mr. T. Taylor, who left a Legacy for that End.

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DEDICATION.

mons to contemplate the Works of God; by which Instance of generous Zeal, tho' dead he yet speaketh. The liberal Man deviseth liberal Things: A laudable Example this, in an Age of uncommon Infidelity. Being thereunto called this Year, I readily complied, to cast in my Mite towards perpetuating the Remembrance of that awful Morning. That the divine Blessing may attend your stated Worship; that the fluctuating Conduct of *One*, may not move any of you from your own steadfastness, and that you may maintain the same Measures of Unanimity, which hitherto (even in a Time of Trial and Danger) you have so conspicuously shewn, are the earnest Wishes of

Your most sincere,

Humble Friend und Servant,

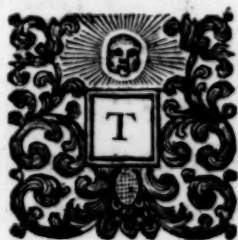
D A. R E E S.



EXOD. XII. 26, 27.

*And it shall come to pass, when your
Children shall say unto you, what
mean you by this Service?*

*That ye shall say — And the Peo-
ple bowed the Head and wor-
shipped.*



THE bare reading of this Passage will easily give you the Reason, why I omit the intermediate Clauses of the 27th Verse, and only take in the first and last Sentences of it. So that I am very sensible of the Original and direct Occasion upon which these Words were spoken, and I am very far from attempting to make any formal Comparison be-

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tween the *Jewish* Celebration of the Pass-over; and your annual Attendance on this Day. *That* was observed by a solemn express Appointment of God himself, for very extraordinary Purposes: *This* is only a voluntary Agreement humbly to commemorate an awful Providence, that fell out some few Years ago. However, I hope I may venture to lay the Foundation of my present Discourse in these Words, and without offering any Violence to the proper Meaning of them, I may be allowed to take Occasion from them, to set before you the Design of our present Attendance, and to accommodate them to us, and to our Circumstances by such a Supplement as this. *And it shall come to pass, when your Children shall say unto you, what mean you by this Service? That ye shall say—*“ We
 “ mean dutifully to affect our Minds with a
 “ fresh Remembrance of a remarkable Providence, wherein God manifested his Power
 “ by a strong and dreadful Wind, in these
 “ Nations, and other Western Parts of *Europe*, even such a stormy Wind as threatened utter Ruin and Destruction to all before
 “ it: And we mean this further by it, *viz.*
 “ to

“ to transmit the Memorial of so amazing a
 “ Providence to our Children, and to the
 “ rising Generation.” As ’tis very natural for
 young Persons, especially such as were born
 since, or for those who were of tender
 Years when this happened, to ask their Pa-
 rents and aged Friends, what is the Mean-
 ing of your yearly Observance of this Day!
 So ’tis just and reasonable they should be
 satisfied; that they may humbly join with
 us in owning the mighty Power of God.

Having by this brief Introduction given
 you to understand, to what Purpose I make
 use of this Passage, I shall endeavour to im-
 prove the present Opportunity in the fol-
 lowing manner.

- I. By shewing that ’tis expected from all
 religious People, to be as faithful as
 they can, in communicating the Know-
 ledge of God and of his Ways to their
 Children, and to any others whom
 they have to do with.
- II. In giving some brief Hints of that par-
 ticular Providence, which gave rise to
 the present Service.

III. I shall close up all by a suitable Application.

As to the first of these 'twill readily be allowed, that 'tis the Duty of all religious People to be as faithful and diffusive as they can in communicating the Knowledge of God and of his Ways to their Children, and to all others whom they may have to do with. But though this may soon be granted to be an incumbent and evident Duty, yet it may seasonably be asked, how, and in what Instances is it expected from us to discharge it?

I answer, it may and ought to be done in these two following Ways, on each of which I design to insist a little.

1. By leading them into the Knowledge of the revealed Will of God in general, and establishing them in the Belief of the Truth of it.

2. By recommending to them in a special Manner, the constant Agency of the Divine Providence, or the Reality of God's Government of this World, and all the Affairs thereof.

To

To begin with the former of these, one eminent way of imparting to others the Knowledge of God, is by inculcating to them his revealed Will, and establishing them in the Belief of the Truth of it.

And certainly 'tis one of the greatest Blessings that God has vouchsafed to the Children of Men, even to grant to them the Benefit of his written Word; *'tis a Light to our Feet, and a Lamp to our Path*, in passing through this World of Darkness and Danger. This was the Advantage that the *Jew* had above the *Greek*, or that the Children of *Israel* of old had, above the rest of the Nations; *for to them were committed the Oracles of God*. The *Psalmist* took notice of this, and gloried in it, in the Behalf of the *Jewish Church*, *Psalms* cxlvii. 19, 20. *He sheweth his Word unto Jacob, and his Statutes and his Judgments unto Israel; he hath not dealt so with any Nation, and as for his Judgments they have not known them*. And we may observe what a solemn Charge the Lord gave to the Elders and Rulers, such as Fathers, and Masters, and Heads of Families in *Israel*,

after the Delivery of the Law, that they should teach their Children, and transmit to their Posterity the sacred Ordinances which they themselves had received. The Account we have in *Deut. vi. ver. 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 20, 21, 24.* Now these are the Commandments, the Statutes and the Judgments, which the Lord your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them. And these Words which I command thee this Day, shall be in thine Heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy Children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine House, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a Sign upon thine Hand, and they shall be as Frontlets between thine Eyes, and thou shalt write them upon the Posts of thine House, and upon thy Gates. And when thy Son asketh thee in time to come, what mean the Testimonies, and the Statutes, and the Judgments which the Lord our God commanded you? Then shalt thou say unto thy Son, we were Pharaoh's Bondmen, and the Lord brought us out of Egypt by a mighty Hand, and the Lord shewed Signs and Wonders,

great

great and sore upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh and all his Household before our Eyes, and the Lord commanded us to do all these Statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our Good always, that he might preserve us alive as it is at this Day. Thus we find the Zeal of the Lord himself for the Preservation and Propagation of his own Word, in and amongst the Families of the Children of *Israel*.

And to do Justice to the Character of the *Jews* in general, they were very industrious in teaching their Children the Letter of their Laws, and very tenacious of the Customs and Ordinances handed to them from Father to Son : Happy would it have been for them, if they had studied more the spiritual Intent and Purport of their own Writings, as well as to have been careful in preserving their Records to their Posterity in the literal Copies of them. However the Charge in the main affects us as well as it did them ; 'tis for our Admonition and Imitation ; we ought to have the highest Esteem, and most sacred Regard for God's revealed Will, and to recommend it earnestly as the richest and noblest

Treasure to our Children. *Psalm* xix. ver. 7, 8, 9, 10. *The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul; the Testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the Simple. The Statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the Heart; the Commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightning the Eyes. The Fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the Judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than Gold, yea than much fine Gold, sweeter also than Honey, and the Honey Comb. Moreover, by them is thy Servant warned, and in keeping of them there is great Reward.* And 'tis very observable, that the whole of the cxixth *Psalm* is composed with a great deal of divine Art and Care, on purpose to set forth the Dignity and Excellency, the Amiableness and Beauty, the Usefulness and Purity of the sacred Scriptures.

Nor have the Writers of the New Testament been wanting, in maintaining the Character, and in extolling the divine Worth of Revelation, and in asserting the Original of all the sacred Books to be directly from the Spirit of God.

Thus

Thus the Apostle *Paul* assured *Timothy*, *All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness.* And the Apostle *Peter* speaks to the same Purpose, *2 Ep. i. 21. For the Prophecy came not in old time by the Will of Man, but holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

I conclude this Head with observing, that 'tis a very seasonable time now, in this loose and sceptical Day wherein we live, for religious Men to stand up in defence of the *Oracles of God, the Scriptures of Truth.* Satan has his Agents almost in every Company, in all Conversations, very busy, attempting to bear down the divine Origin and Authority of revealed Religion, and sowing the *Tares* of Deism and Infidelity amongst the present Generation. Let the faithful Servants of the Lord then glory in this, in asserting the Honour of the great God, by vindicating the Truth of his written Word.

2. This brings me in the next Place to another Point of the utmost Importance, that we are to teach our Children and
others

others under our Care, and that is the constant Agency of the divine Providence, or the Reality of God's Government of this World, and all the Affairs thereof.

Next to the Existence of God, and the Veracity of his Word, the Belief of his real Providence enlarges the Minds of Men, and gives them a just Apprehension of that Power, by which they are surrounded and supported.

And indeed a tolerable Notion of the Doctrine of Providence, is of greater Moment, and of greater Comfort to the Church of God than most People are aware of; I mean to be satisfied in the Truth of this, that God ruleth in both Worlds, amongst the *Armies of Heaven, and the Inhabitants of the Earth*; that he is not only the Conserver and Upholder, but the wise Governor and Disposer of Persons and Things, from the greatest to the least, or that all things, and all Causes and Effects are subject to his sway and over-rule.

I am naturally led to touch a little upon this Subject in the Prosecution of my present Design; and that I may comprize as
much

much as I can in few Words, of God's Dominion and Disposal of the Universe, I would observe that Angels and Men, both good and evil, are under his peculiar Government and Direction; and that the Celestial Orbs and Luminaries, the Sun, Moon and Stars are kept in their regular Course and Order by his infinite Wisdom and Power; and likewise that the Earth and Seas, and the ambient Air, with the Stores and Furniture of it, are so far from being beneath his Notice, that he often moves and actuates them, to the Astonishment and Conviction of the most harden'd of the Children of Men.

We have a Variety of very beautiful Hints and Descriptions of God's universal Rule in the Holy Scriptures, particularly in the Book of *Psalms*, ciii. ult. *The Lord hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens, and his Kingdom ruleth over all. Bless the Lord, ye his Angels, that excel in Strength, that do his Commandments, hearkening to the Voice of his Word. Bless the Lord, all ye his Hosts, ye Ministers of his that do his Pleasure. Bless the Lord, all his Works, in all Places of his Dominions.*

Dominions. And again in the cxlviii. *Pſalm*, in a moſt moving and elegant Manner, where the glorious Angels in the Heights of Heaven, together with the Sun, Moon and Stars, the Earth, Dragons and all Deeps, Fire, Hail and Snow, Vapour and ſtormy Wind, Mountains and all Hills, fruitful Trees and all Cedars, Beaſts and all Cattle, creeping things and flying Fowl, Kings of the Earth, and all People, Princes and all Judges of the Earth, both young Men and Maidens, old Men and Children are all loudly called upon to own and praise him *whoſe Name alone is excellent, and whoſe Glory is above the Earth and Heavens.* So that here is a general Summons for the whole Univerſe, and all the Inhabitants and Beings therein, to pay their Homage to their awful Maker and Governor.

It may not be amiſs for me to take Notice here, that it has been, and is ſtill the Opinion of many learned and judicious Men, that God diſpoſes the moſt remarkable Occurrences of this lower World by the Miniſtration of Angels; and the Scriptures in divers Places ſeem not only to favour, but even ſtrongly to ſupport this Opinion :

Opinion: For as to the good Angels, *they* are exprefly called the Minifters of the Lord that do his Pleafure; and we read, *He maketh his Angels Spirits, and his Minifters a Flame of Fire*: but in an efpecial manner, in regard to his Children and People, as I fhall have occafion to hint, they are all of them faid to be *miniftring Spirits, fent forth to minifter for them who are Heirs of Salvation*.

We have however very early Accounts of thefe glorious Agents, being employed to ferve or punifh, to defend or deftroy Mankind.

No fooner were *Adam* and *Eve* turned out of *Eden* for their Tranfgreffion, but we find Angels, under the Name of *Che-rubims*, were placed to guard the Paffage, and to prevent their Return, that they might not come near the Tree of Life again. *Gen. iii.*

We have likewise a particular Relation of thefe heavenly Meflengers being fent to *Abraham* and *Lot*, and revealing to them the Design of God, in regard to the De-fttruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, and the *Cities of the Plain* that perifhed along with them. I fhall

I shall take little or no Notice at present of their appearing to particular Persons on secret and special Messages. My Design is only to observe, where they were commissioned on certain great and astonishing Occasions; as for instance, 'twas an Angel, at command of the Lord, that at midnight smote all the First-born in the Land of *Egypt*, from the First-born of *Pharaoh* that sat on his Throne, unto the First-born of the Captive that was in the Dungeon, and all First-born of Cattle, *Exod. xii. 29.*

Again when *David* King of *Israel* had grievously provoked the Lord by numbring the People, the Lord was pleased to give him his Choice of three Punishments; either three Years Famine, or three Months being destroyed before his Enemies, or three Days Pestilence; the Angel of the Lord destroying in all the Coasts of *Israel*. And the History tells us, 1 *Chron. xxi. 15, 16.* that God sent an Angel to *Jerusalem* to destroy it, and as he was destroying, *The Lord beheld and repented him of the Evil, and said to the Angel that destroyed, 'tis enough, stay now thine Hand: And the Angel of the Lord stood by the threshing Floor*
of

of Ornan the Jebusite; and David lift up his Eyes, and saw the Angel of the Lord stand between the Earth and the Heaven, having a drawn Sword in his Hand, stretched forth over Jerusalem.

Further, when Sennacherib King of Assyria invaded Judah, and threatened Jerusalem, sending an impious Message to blaspheme the Name of the living God in the Days of Hezekiah, the Prophet Isaiah acquaints us, Chap. xxxvii. ver. 36. that the Angel of the Lord went forth and smote in the Camp of the Assyrians on that Night, an hundred and fourscore and five thousand, and when the rest arose early in the Morning, behold they were all dead Corpses.

But we find that the holy Angels are not only employed in influencing Armies, as in giving Courage and Intrepidity to the one Party, and in dispiriting and intimidating of others, as in the Case of Gideon and the Midianites, Judges vii. but they are often active likewise in the Disposal of Nations, and in the Revolutions of States and of Kingdoms here upon Earth. They invisibly dwell and preside at the Courts of Princes, and secretly pry into their Cabinets,

nets, to influence them and their Counsellors to act as the Almighty would have Affairs go in the World.

I shall give but one notable Instance to this Purpose, and that shall be in the Case of the vast and rich Kingdom of *Persia*, according to the Account we have from the Prophet *Daniel*; the holy Man had humbled himself by Fasting and Prayer before God, and was very desirous to know how it should fare with his People, or how God would think fit to dispose of the *Jewish* Nation, and what sort of Providences should attend them. God sent the Angel *Gabriel* to answer his Request, and to give him Satisfaction in this Point, *Dan. x. 12. Then said he unto me, Fear not Daniel, for from the first Day that thou didst set thine Heart to understand, and to chasten thy self before thy God, thy Words were heard, and I am come for thy Words.*

But observe what the good Angel said in the 13. ver. *The Prince of the Kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty Days.*

But lo Michael, one of the chief Princes, came to help me, and I remained there with the Kings of Persia.

Ver. 14. *Now I am come to make thee understand, what shall befall thy People in the latter Days, for yet the Vision is for many Days.* By the Prince of the Kingdom of *Persia* withstanding or opposing of the good Angel in the 13th ver. is by very judicious Expositors understood an evil Angel, who at this Time had as it were taken up his Residence at the Court of *Persia*, to exasperate and instigate the Counsellors thereof against the *Jews*, to prevent the Building of the City and Temple of *Jerusalem*.

I am not insensible that some would apprehend by the Prince of the Kingdom of *Persia* in this Place, *Cambyfes* the Son of *Cyrus*; but the Sense runs strong that it was an evil Angel, who had made the *Persian* Court his Province in a Manner, to act in for a Time against the Interest of the *Jews*, and consequently against God as far as 'twas permitted. The holy Angel *Gabriel* declared, that none helped him in his Negotiations in favour of the Return of the *Jews*, but the Arch-Angel *Michael*, who stood by him, and assisted him to promote the Good of those poor People. Thus he said to

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Daniel,

Daniel, ver. 12. But I will shew thee, that which is written in the Scriptures of Truth, and there is none that holdeth with me in these Things, but Michael your Prince *.

Where 'tis very observable, that *Michael* one of the Chief, joining with the other Angel *Gabriel* in promoting the Welfare of the Jewish People, is called their Prince, the Prince of their Interest, and that in the same Sense, as the evil Angel in the 13th ver. had been called the Prince of the Kingdom of *Persia*. There were very great Designs upon the Wheel at this Time, but very surprising Events, and extraordinary Revolutions came to pass in the Kingdom of *Persia* in some Time afterwards: For according to this Prophecy of *Daniel*, *Alexander the Great*, King of *Grecia*, marched against *Darius Codomannus* King of *Persia*, and overthrew him in two great

* *Ex Angelis quosdam Gentibus quasi Præsides præesse, quibusdam singulorum hominum creditam esse curam, ne eis incommodent & noceant pestiferi Dæmones.* Aug.

Hinc (viz. Dan. x.) Hieronymus & alii omnes collegerunt, singulis Provinciis certum aliquem præfectum esse Angelum.

Clemens Alexandrinus affirmat, per singulas Gentes, civitatesque distributas esse Angelorum præfecturas. Zanch.

pitched

pitched Battels, which put an end both to him and his Kingdoms. This is to be understood by the Vision of the Ram, and the He-goat that you have an Account of in the eighth Chapter of this Prophecy; by the Ram is intended the King of *Persia*, and by the He-goat the King of *Grecia*, who is said to be filled with Choler, and to run upon the other in the Fury of his Power, casting him down to the Ground, and stamping upon him, *and there was none that could deliver the Ram out of his Hand.*

I have insisted somewhat the longer, and been the plainer upon this Head, because 'tis of very great Importance to the Church of God, and of very great Comfort to religious People to know and believe, that the Angels of God have a considerable Hand in dispensing the Affairs of this World. They are commissioned by their glorious Lord to transact many awful Passages in the Course of Providence: But as has been mentioned already, in regard to the Church and Children of God, they have their peculiar Charge. Are they not all ministering Spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of Salvation?

If we belong to God, we are in a great Measure under the Tuition and Guardianship of these invisible Friends and Well-wishers all our Days, from our Entrance into this World, till our Arrival in Glory. *Mat. xviii. 10. Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you, that in Heaven their Angels do always behold the Face of my Father which is in Heaven.* We are assured, that they greatly rejoice at our Conversion to God, foreseeing thereby, that we shall in the Issue be Companions and Fellow - Citizens with them above. They kindly watch over us Night and Day, sleeping or waking, at Times and Seasons that we are not aware of; 'tis impossible for us to express, or indeed to apprehend from how many Dangers and Disasters they deliver us. *Psalms xci. 11, 12. He shall give his Angels Charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy Ways. They shall bear thee up in their Hands, lest thou dash thy Foot against a Stone.* And *Psalms xxxiv. 78. The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.*

We

We have Reason to believe, that they are often present in our solemn Assemblies, to observe our serious Attendance, and to take Notice of that Reverence, Order and Decorum, wherewith we discharge the Worship of God. 1 Tim. v. 21. *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect Angels, that thou observe these Things.*

And at the Close of this frail Life, they give their faithful and friendly Attendance on our Dissolution, to conduct our naked Spirits thro' Regions unknown to us, unto the heavenly Mansions. When *Lazarus* died, we read, *he was carried by the Angels into Abraham's Bosom.*

It may not be improper now for me to shew you, that the evil Angels are sometimes permitted of God to act their Part; and tho' they are in Chains and under Restraint, yet the Almighty thinks fit, upon some Occasions, to let them loose in measure and for a season, that they may exert their Power in a surprizing Manner, in the Air and upon the Earth. The Scripture saith nothing in vain; the Devil is called, *The Prince of the Power of the*

Air; and that he has Power to move and disturb the Air, and to assault and annoy Mankind upon the Earth is very evident from the Word of God. The Case of *Job* will put this Point beyond Dispute, 'tis said Chap. i. ver. 7. that the Lord asked Satan, *whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord and said, from going to and fro in the Earth, and from walking up and down in it.* And we find that having obtained leave of the Lord to tempt and afflict that God-Man, one way amongst divers others which he took was this, by his own Operation, he raised a Storm of Wind, and sent a violent Gust from the Wilderness, which smote the four Corners of the House of *Job's* eldest Son; so that it fell down, and killed all the Sons and Daughters of *Job*, who were at that time met together therein, ver. 18, 19.

Again when the Devil was permitted to tempt our Saviour, we read *Mat. iv. 5.* that he took him up into the holy City, and placed him on a Pinnacle of the Temple, with a Design to persuade him to cast himself down. But what a dreadful Havock did he make in the Bodies of those

poor Wretches that were held and possessed by him in and about the Days of our Saviour, which we have an Account of, See *Mat. xvii. 15. He is lunatick and sore vexed, for oftentimes he falleth into the Fire, and oft into the Water. And the Spirit cried, and rent him, and he was as one dead,* Mark ix. 26. and we find in the Book of the Revelation, that Satan and his Angels are sometimes bound, and at other times let loose; which shews, that the infernal Spirits are under the absolute Controul of the Almighty, tho' he lengthens their Chain upon some Occasions best known to himself.

And there is no doubt to be made, there are Legions of evil Angels moving to and again upon this Earth, and in this Air where we dwell; all these things considered, as one well observes, “ Our Case here in this
 “ World appears to be plainly such, as is
 “ the Case of a Company of naked and un-
 “ armed Men in an howling Wilderness,
 “ where are a Multitude of wild Beasts,
 “ Lions, Bears, Tygers, Wolves and Ser-
 “ pents every where besetting them; should
 “ those miserable Men have Succour sent
 C 4 “ them,

“ them, able to keep those hurtful Crea-
 “ tures from them, and to confine them
 “ to their Dens and Holes; would not this
 “ be accounted a very signal Blessing? Now
 “ thus has the great God done for us, in
 “ sending forth his good Angels for our
 “ Relief and Defence, while we are here
 “ in the dangerous Wilderness of this
 “ World, where infinite Numbers of Devils
 “ are ever roving, or going about to de-
 “ vour.” In a Word, the State we are in
 at present, seems to be a common Theatre,
 where good and bad Men, and where good
 and evil Angels act their respective Parts;
 according as they are either influenced and
 commissioned on the one Hand, or restrained
 and curbed on the other, by the Sovereign
 Will and Power of God. But to conclude
 this Head, as to what I have to say at present,
 in regard to the Subserviency or Agency of
 Angels, whether good or evil, I would ob-
 serve, that the Reins of Government and
 Providence are nevertheless in the Hands
 of the great God; for whether good An-
 gels are directed, or evil Angels permitted
 to bring about such and such Events; yet
 still 'tis the Almighty Sovereign, that either
 issues

issues out the Order, or is pleased to grant the Permission. Nor is it any Diminution of his Glory, that such mighty Things should be done by the Angelic Power, as we find there are; it rather redounds more to the Honour of God in that he hath made such Creatures, and endowed them with Faculties capable of producing such Events.

I now come briefly to touch upon the Agency of Providence with respect to Mankind; and I need say the less about it, because this Branch of divine Government is more generally believed among us; and well it may, for 'tis the Lord who has formed us in the Womb, and created our Spirits with us: *'Tis in him we live, move and have our Being*; he is upon our Right-Hand, and upon our Left, whether we perceive and acknowledge him or not. *He knows our down sitting, and our up rising, our walking and our lying down, there is not a Word in our Tongue, but lo, he knows it altogether*; he encompasseth all our Paths, and sees our Thoughts, and the Intentions of our Hearts afar off. *Such Knowledge is too wonderful for us, it is too high, we cannot attain unto it.*

There

There is an appointed time for our abode and continuance here on Earth, and to lengthen out the Period is not in our Power. Our times are in his Hands. *Job xiv. 5, 6. Seeing his Days are determined, and the Number of his Months are with thee, thou hast appointed his Bounds, that he cannot pass. Turn from him, that he may rest, till he shall accomplish as an Hireling his Day.* And the Scriptures assure us, that God condescends to take Notice of the very minutest Circumstances of our Lives, as where we are to be fixed, and in what Neighbourhood, or what Places of abode are assigned us. *Acts xvii. 26. And he made of one Blood all Nations of Men, for to dwell on all the Face of the Earth, and hath determined the time before appointed, and the Bounds of their Habitation.* But to put it beyond Dispute, that the Providence of God is very exact in surveying of us, and of every thing that belongs to us, we are told, that *a Sparrow cannot light upon the Ground, nor a Hair fall from the Head without the Knowledge of our heavenly Father.*

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I may now proceed to observe to you, that the heavenly Bodies, I mean the Orbs and Luminaries, are under the Dominion and Direction of God, or there are certain Rules and Laws of their awful Maker, by which they are guided and governed. Jer. xxxi. 35, 36. *Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the Sun for a Light by Day, and the Ordinances of the Moon, and of the Stars for a Light by Night.* Again we read, *He appointeth the Moon for Seasons, and the Sun knoweth his going down.* And the Lord gave a signal Demonstration of his absolute Rule over these vast and glorious Bodies in the Days of *Joshua*, Chap. x. ver. 12, 13, 14. *Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou Moon, in the Valley of Ajalon. And the Sun stood still, and the Moon stayed—And there was no Day like that before it, or after it.*

Further, as to this Globe of Earth and Sea, that Part of the Universe where we dwell, and where we converse, 'tis most clear and undeniable, that every thing is under the divine Influence and Direction; the Earth and Sea, and all that in them is, the great and wise God supports and disposes

poses of. One Instance may serve for all, to give us Satisfaction in this Point, and that is the memorable Deluge in the time of *Noah*, when God broke up the Bounds of the Sea, and opened the Windows and Flood-gates of Heaven, and destroyed all living Things, and Mankind from off the Face of the Earth, except the Family of *Noah*. And we have a visible Token left us, enough to convince the most stupid, that God governs among us, even the Rainbow in the Cloud, which we often see with our own Eyes, as a sure Pledge, that God will never enter into Judgment with the Earth any more in such a Manner.

As to the Air that fills the vast Space between the Firmament and this terraqueous Globe, with all the Stores and amazing Commotions that are in it, they are expressly said to be under the divine Government; Thunder, Lightening, Storms of Hail and Snow, Rain or Wind, are appointed and over-ruled by the Hand of the Lord, *who maketh the Clouds his Chariots, and walketh upon the Wings of the Wind.* 'Tis a most excellent and lofty Description that *Job* gives Chap. xxvi. ver. 7, 8, 11, 14.

He stretcheth out the North over the empty Place, and hangeth the Earth upon nothing. He bindeth up the Waters in his thick Clouds, and the Cloud is not rent under them. The Pillars of Heaven tremble, and are astonished at his Reproof. Lo these are Parts of his Ways, but how little a Portion is heard of him? But the Thunder of his Power who can understand? And we read that the Almighty levelled some uncommon Storms and Tempest against particular Enemies of his, as that the *Stars in their Courses fought against Sisera*, Judges v. 20. And again we find, that the *Lord thundered with a great Thunder upon the Philistines, and discomfited them, and they were smitten before Israel*, 1 Sam. vii. 10. So it is said concerning his Disposal of the Wind, *stormy Wind fulfilling his Word*, answering the End that God would have it. And speaking after the Manner of Men: He is represented as bringing the *Wind out of his Treasuries*, as if it had been laid up in store among other things, to be brought out upon some special Occasions.

Thus I have attempted to give a summary View of the active and permissive Providences

Providences of God, as running through the whole Universe, from the highest Rank of Beings, to the lowest and meanest things that are therein.

II. 'Tis time for me now to give some short Account of that particular Providence, which gave rise to the present Service; and that was an astonishing Storm of Wind, that fell out six and twenty Years ago, chiefly as on the Morning of this Day; such a Storm it was, as carried Horror and Amazement along with it, and threatened the poor Inhabitants of these Isles with utter Ruin and Desolation. The dreadful Power of that Wind, and the hideous Noise that attended it, made the stoutest Hearts to tremble, and caused many profligate Wretches to pray unto the Lord, who, I am satisfied, were not used to call upon his Name, with any Seriousness before. 'Twas so terrible that few, or perhaps none then living, did or could remember the like. We did not know what Part of our Dwellings to flee to for Security, the whole trembling from Top to Bottom, the Air and the Earth were as if jointly angry with a sinful People. And

And as one well observed then, if the Lord had suffered the Wind to rise a little higher, the Inhabitants of this great, rich, and flourishing City and Suburbs, would have been buried in the Ruins of their own Habitations. The Terror it struck, and the Devastations it made by Land and Seas are not to be expressed; nor was it confined to these Nations only, it touched very severely upon some of the bordering Provinces, and other Parts of *Europe*.

I shall not enter into Particulars, they who would be further informed as to this Affair, may please to take the Account from what has been published, in a little time after that Calamity, by several faithful and ingenious Hands.

It remains only for me to make some Reflections on what has been advanced as to the Doctrine of Providence, and that I shall do in the following Particulars.

1. We may easily observe, what a strange Infatuation has seized the Minds of Multitudes of People in this Age, they will neither see, hear, nor consider what God does in the World. They would rob him of the Glory of governing it, and wilfully
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and foolishly ascribe to a blind Chance, and a fortuitous Hit, those Occurrences and Events, which are guided only by God's own skilful and unerring Hand. Many pretend to study Nature, and forget the God of Nature, who wisely disposes of all the Parts, and over-rules all the Operations of it. And tho' these Men will not understand it, yet there is not the least Transaction brought about, without the Notice or Direction of the Almighty. They are the Words of God himself, in Psalm l. 21, 22. *These Things hast thou done, and I kept silence, thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thy self, but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine Eyes. Now consider this ye that forget God, lest I tear you in Pieces, and there be none to deliver.*

2. The excellent Doctrine we have been insisting upon, gives strong Ground of great Comfort and Peace to all religious People. They are in the Hands of God in all Places, and at all times, nothing can befall them but what the Lord sees, and thinks fit to suffer; and tho' it be a hard Matter very often for us to be reconciled to his Providences,

dences, yet still 'tis the divine Hand that either raiseth up, or casteth down, that either comforteth or afflicteth; and blessed be his Name, we are assured that every Dispensation shall work together for Good, to them who love God, and are the Called according to his Purpose. 'Tis this sweetens all his Dealings towards his People, that even Chastisements and Afflictions come from the Hands of a Father, for wise Reasons and for good Ends. The Lord is pleased to visit us sometimes, that he may hear from us by Prayer and fervent Cries at the Throne of Grace. Thus he speaks thro' the Prophet, *in their Affliction they will seek me early*. If adverse Providences tend to bring us to reflect upon our Ways, to take away Sin, to draw us nearer to God, and to stir up in us a Spirit of Prayer, we shall have reason to bless our heavenly Father for such a Visitation, for perhaps before we went astray.

3. Let us learn to be careful and humble Observers of the Providences of God, and we shall find the Comfort and Advantage of it. As Stupidity in this Respect is a Sin, so it deprives People of many

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a pleasant Review of past Favours and Mercies received. 'Tis the Character of a good Man, that he takes Notice of God's Ways and Works. And the Scripture says, that upon some Occasions a religious Person *shall see and fear*, and upon other Occasions, that he *shall hear and be glad*.

According as God appears in his Operations, so the Soul of a godly Man is affected with either Sorrow or Joy, with Humiliation or Triumph. A stupid Wretch loses the inward Pleasure of looking back upon the kind Dealings of God towards him. *A brutish Man knoweth not, neither doth a Fool understand this. Were we more observant and watchful, we should have daily Invitations to Admiration and Praise.*

What grateful Songs of Deliverance should fill our Hearts and our Tongues, when we reflect on some peculiar Providences that have passed over us! Would it not be an agreeable Entertainment for the *Mariner* to call to Mind, and to be able to say, on such a Voyage I was in very great Danger, near such Shelves, Rocks, or Sands, and in a dreadful Storm, and yet the Lord delivered me from them all? I remember my Heart
failing,

failing, and my Hands trembling, and that I made a solemn Vow, that if the Lord would but save me at that time, I would become another Man for the future; his Vows are now upon me, and I will religiously pay them, and devote the rest of my Days to him. Again, many a one of the military Life in this Nation may reflect on the glorious Actions of the late War with a grateful Soul, and say, I was in such a dreadful Battle when thousands fell on my right and left Hand, but I was preserved; the Fire and Sword made fearful Havock, and hurried great Numbers into Eternity, but I was spared. What Thanks shall I render unto the Lord, how shall I duly sing his Praise! And indeed there is scarce any one of us here present, but may recollect something remarkable, as to God's delivering him, either by Night or Day, in the Darkness or in the Light, at such a Time and Place, or upon such a Journey, when a Leg or an Arm might have been broken, or Life itself taken away; such a one may say, either the Lord by his own immediate Word commanded Deliverance, or he gave his Angel Charge concerning

cerning me, however the Praise is due unto
his great Name alone. I am sure there are
some here, who join with me in these Ac-
knowledgments, and for late signal Deli-
verances too. Let such invite others to
own the Agency of the Providences of God;
*And who is wise, and he shall understand
these Things? Prudent and he shall know
them? For the Ways of the Lord are right,
and the Just shall walk in them: But the
Transgressors shall fall therein.*

F I N I S.



The Affair of our Father
 John 17:1-11
 17:1-11

